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Response to Office Action of May 23, 2006

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Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 1 with the following paragraph (Applicants note that this paragraph was previously added by the Preliminary Amendment filed on February 26, 2004 (*see* page 2)):

This application is a Division of U.S. Application No.: 09/674,866, ~~filed June 4, 2004~~ now U.S. Patent No. 6,719,980, which is the National Stage of International Application PCT/EP99/03244, filed May 6, 1999, which claims priority to European patent application EP 98201461.5, filed May 8, 1998.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, lines 15-23 with the following paragraph:

FIGURE 2: Nucleotide sequence of C-terminus of E2 gene (nucleotides 3490-3594 of SEQ ID NO.: 1; encoding amino acids 404-438 of SEQ ID NO.: 6)/"long"6K gene (nucleotides 1-204 of SEQ ID NO.: 14; encoding amino acids 1-68 of SEQ ID NO.: 15)/N-terminus of E1 gene (nucleotides 3691-3829 of SEQ ID NO.: 1; encoding amino acids 1-46 of SEQ ID NO.: 8). The putative cleavage sites between the E2/6K protein and 6K/E1 protein are represented by the vertical line (|) The nucleotide sequence encoding the "long"6K protein is 204 nucleotides long and encodes a protein of 68 amino acids. The numbering between brackets on the right of the sequence refers to the nucleotide- and amino acid residues of the 6K gene or protein respectively. At nucleotide position 44 of the nucleotide sequence encoding the 6K gene the G-residue can be replaced with an A residue, resulting in a 6K protein with an N residue at amino acid position 15 of the amino acid sequence depicted in the figure.